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ABSTRACT

To promote academic integrity among students, a committee of faculty and administrators at the University of California, San Diego, developed a tutorial or instructional module designed to educate users about what constitutes academic integrity and how to recognize practices that may be indicative of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. The tutorial used a series of examples of activities and behaviors that illustrated possible violations of academic honesty. Students were given a quiz at the end of each module in the tutorial. A pilot of the tutorial was given to 35 students in the spring 2003 quarter. Overall, participants appeared satisfied with the tutorial program and its format. The majority of the participants rated the quality of the program as excellent or good. However, 91.4% of the participants states that they learned "little" or "some" from the tutorial, and only 25.7% agreed that new information was presented to them. Followup with participating students should establish the reasons for this discrepancy. Students were also asked to provide suggestions to improve the tutorial, and these will be considered in the design of a revised version. Findings suggest that with a few modifications, the tutorial can be used to encourage academic integrity at the university. (Contains 9 figures and 10 references.) (SLD)

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ED 479 133

The Proposed UCSD Academic Integrity Tutorial Pilot Project

A Formative Evaluation

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Background

Nationally, recent incidents of plagiarism and violations of academic integrity among college students have sparked an interest in understanding the scope of these problems on college and university campuses. Professors and administrators have used commercially available programs such as "turnitin.com" and their own locally developed programs to verify the references and citations provided by students as sources for information, quotations, or ideas in papers, projects, and exams.

The availability of enhanced technology has proven to be effective in the efforts to identify instances of plagiarism and promote academic integrity among students. For example, in 2002, because of increased awareness and plagiarism detection programs, 48 students were dismissed and 3 diplomas were revoked for plagiarizing a physics paper at the University of Virginia and 136 students were penalized for copying computer science homework in two different classes at Georgia Tech (Young, 2002; Hoover, 2002).

The number of students who participate in certain types of infractions has ranged from 9-95% depending on the types and objectives of different surveys (Maramark &

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Maline, 1993; McCabe & Trevino, 1993). The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) has examined incidents of plagiarism and academic integrity by surveying undergraduate students. In their 1999 report, which surveyed 2,100 students on 21 campuses, the CAI found that "about one-third of the participating students admitted to serious test cheating and half admitted to one or more instances of serious cheating on written assignments" (The Center for Academic Integrity, n.d.). Another survey found that 84% of students in 1993 admitted to one form of academic dishonesty (McCabe, 1996).

With the growth of the Internet as an academic tool, there is a growing concern about its role in plagiarism. In a study conducted during the 1999-2000 academic year, 25.9% self-reported cutting and pasting text form the Internet some to very often (Scanlon & Neumann, 2002). Despite the range in reported values there is a concern among educators (Maramark & Maline, 1993).

Researchers have also examined factors that may increase or decrease the incidents of dishonest academic behavior on campuses. Although most students acknowledge that plagiarism is wrong (Scanlon & Neumann, 2002), classroom environment (Pulvers & Dierkhoff, 1999), peer behavior or peer pressure (McCabe & Trevino, 1993), existence of honor codes (McCabe, Trevino, Butterfield, 1999; McCabe & Trevino, 1993) and gender (Tibbetts, 1999) are all factors that may affect the rates of incidents. McCabe (2001) also noticed a higher rate of plagiarism in high school students than college students, many whom believe that information on the Internet is public knowledge.

UCSD has also been part of this national effort to focus on academic integrity by employing "turnitin.com" and other measures. Another recent focus of the University's

efforts to promote academic honesty has been to provide activities designed to enhance awareness of academic integrity among students. To that end, a committee comprised of faculty and administrators directed the development of tutorial or instructional module designed to educate users about what constitutes academic integrity and how to recognize practices that may be indicative of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. The tutorial employed a series of examples of activities and behaviors that illustrated possible violations of academic honesty consisting of topics such as the student conduct code, cheating, copying, plagiarizing, paraphrasing, fabricating citations, unauthorized collaboration and altering graded work. Students were given a quiz at the end of each module within the tutorial to test their mastery of the material presented. The tutorial required mastery of the subject matter, thus students selecting an incorrect answer were required to review the examples, the relevant University policy on student conduct, and again choose an answer to the multiple choice question(s). The tutorial and accompanying exam was not designed as a norm-referenced test, but rather as an instructional aid. A pilot of this tutorial was given to a small sample, approximately 35 students, in the Spring, 2003 quarter.

In the long term, faculty and administrators at UCSD are interested in evaluating the effectiveness of this tutorial program in reducing incidents of plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity. In the short-term, the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) was interested in gathering some data on how field test participants viewed the tutorial. SRI consulted with the committee to incorporate a brief questionnaire at the conclusion of the 45-minute, on-line tutorial. The questionnaire included nine closed-ended questions and one open-ended question, all of which evaluated the tutorial

program. A copy of the questionnaire is attached. The eventual intent of the AIC is to require all incoming freshmen students would be required to take the tutorial.

Findings

Overall, participants appeared satisfied with the tutorial program and its format. The majority of the 35 participants (65.7%) rated the quality of this program as "excellent" or "good." An overwhelming majority of participates responded that the tutorial was clear and understandable (88.6% responded "strongly agree" or "agree), the length was "about right" (80.0%) and the intent and objectives of the tutorial were understandable (100% stated "strongly agree" or "agree).

Although the field test participants gave a positive overall rating, however after completing the tutorial, 91.4 % of the participants stated that they learned "little" or "some" from the tutorial. Only 25.7% of the participants "strongly agree" or "agree" that new information was presented to them in the tutorial (Figure 1).

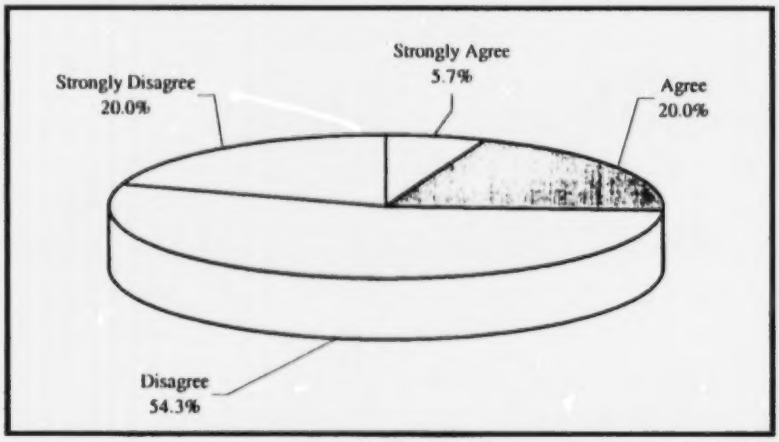

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Figure 1: The tutorial presented information that was new to me.

However, the majority of participants believed the information was applicable to their current assignments (91.4% responded "strongly agree" or "agree"; Figure 2).

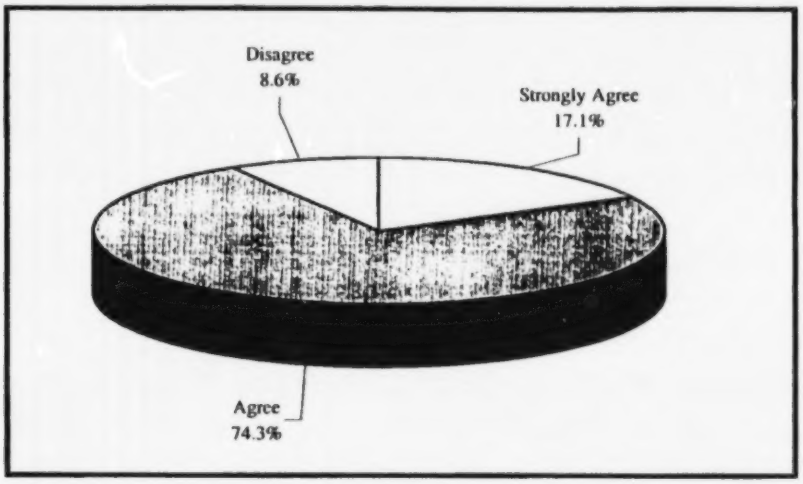

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Figure 2: I can apply the information from this tutorial to my classroom assignments such as research papers, independent projects, or work done in collaboration with classmates.

Interestingly, although the majority of participants felt they learned "little" or "some" from the tutorial, 88.6% of participants stated feeling "less" confident in their ability to conduct, prepare, and communicate findings from their own research after completing the tutorial (Figure 3). Although it is difficult to ascertain the reasons behind this diminished confidence, it may be that participating in the tutorial provoked greater anxiety among participants with respect to the conduct of their own research. It would be important to follow-up with the participating students to examine the reasons behind this inconsistency. Additional investigation could determine if there were particular topics or areas of concern or even identifying potential reasons for the drop in confidence level of participants.

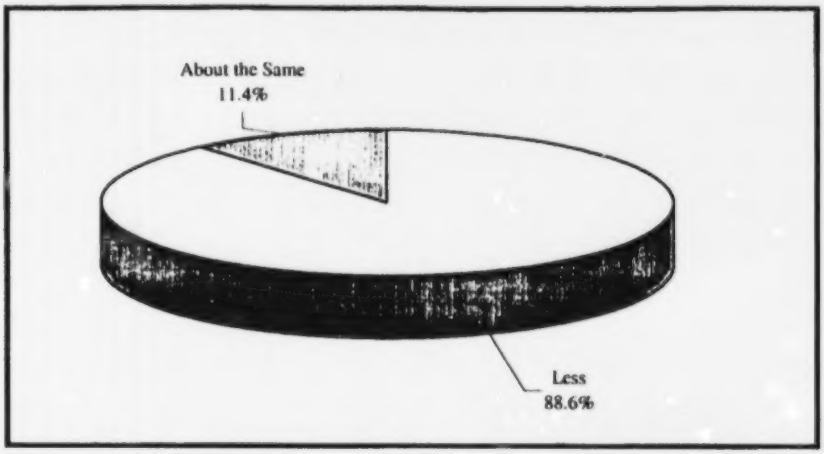

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Figure 3: Confidence in ability to conduct research after completing tutorial

Participants were also asked to provide suggestions to improve the tutorial. These suggestions were gathered using an open-ended question, that inquired about improvements to the tutorial program (see appendix). Twenty-six participants made suggestions. Of those responding, 11 participants mentioned that the scenarios were too easy and could be answered with common sense. It appeared that a review of the material was beneficial, however, students suggested creating more challenging scenarios. One student stated, "The questions that I learned the most from were the ones that weren't obvious and forced me to think. I found that there were many questions that were so easy that I quickly put the correct answer and moved on without thinking." A careful review of the tutorial scenarios could determine if there is any repetition or necessary revisions. Additional inquiries with participating students may reveal situations that are not listed or ones that would be more challenging as suggested. However, it appears that the fundamental concepts are integrated throughout the tutorial. Eight participants also noted there were grammatical errors throughout the tutorial.

Therefore, it would be important to carefully review the tutorial and fix any errors before administering the tutorial program again.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Research indicates that are concerns about academic integrity on college and university campuses. Prior research suggests that high school students are more susceptible to higher violation rates of academic integrity, thus it seems appropriate to implement a program on academic integrity and plagiarism for incoming freshmen students. As for the pilot version, the overall format and design of the tutorial rated very well with the participants. Length, objectives, clarity of information presented in the tutorial, and direct application of presented concepts to academic work were highly rated. Further inquiry could examine confidence levels of students with respect to these issues and additional scenarios to enhance the tutorial program. With a few modifications, the tutorial and the AIC should be able to begin examining the long-term objective of reducing incidents of plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity at UCSD.

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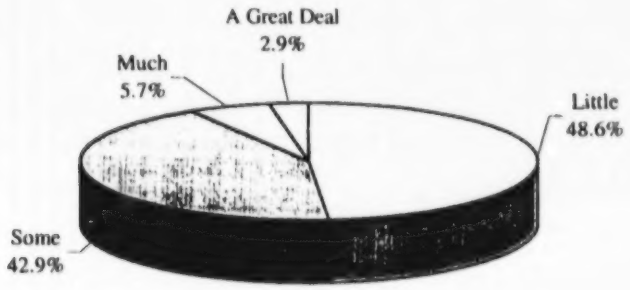
Responses to Individual Questions

Question 1: Amount learned about academic integrity and honesty from this tutorial.



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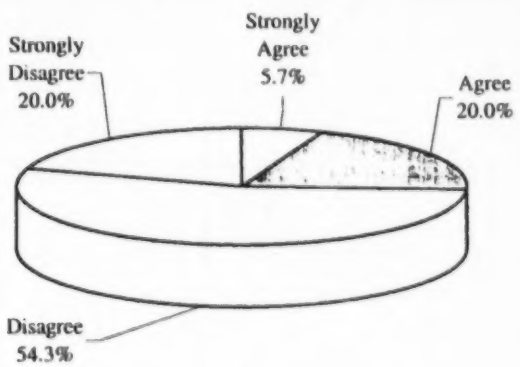
Question 2: The tutorial presented information that was new to me.



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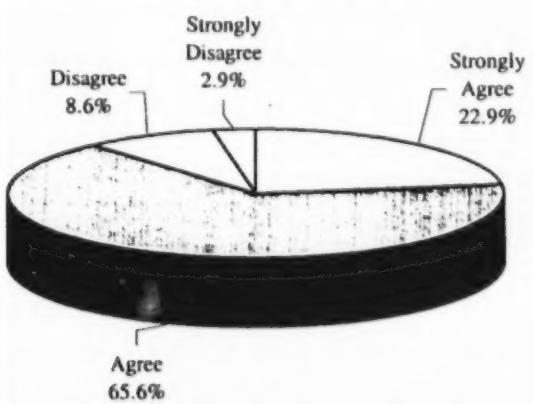
Question 3: I see a direct application of the concepts presented in the tutorial to my academic work.



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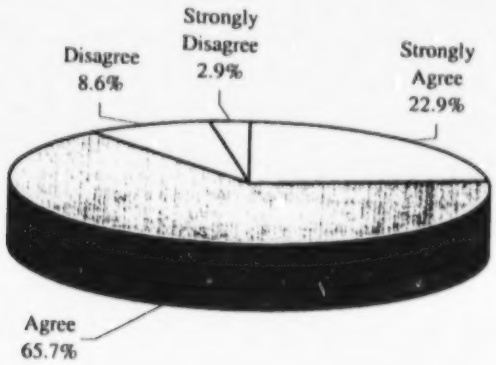
Question 4: The information presented in the tutorial was clear and understandable.



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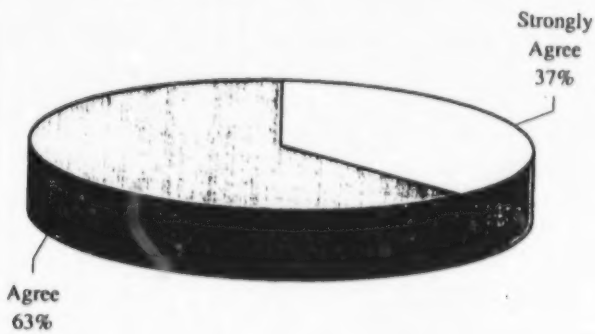
Question 5: The intent and objectives of the tutorial were clear to me.



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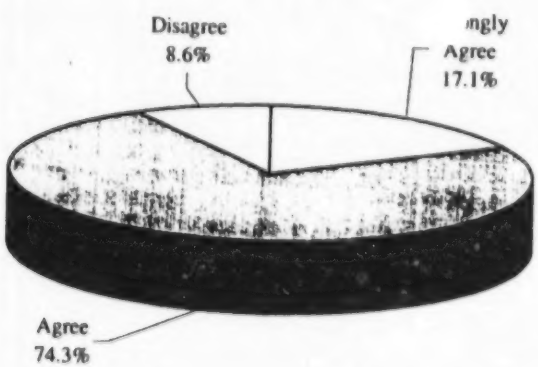
Question 6: I can apply the information from this tutorial to my classroom assignments such as research papers, independent projects, or work done in collaboration with classmates.



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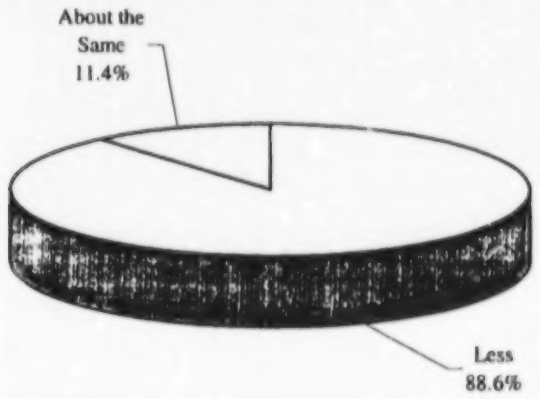
Question 7: Confidence in Ability to Conduct Research After Completing Tutorial



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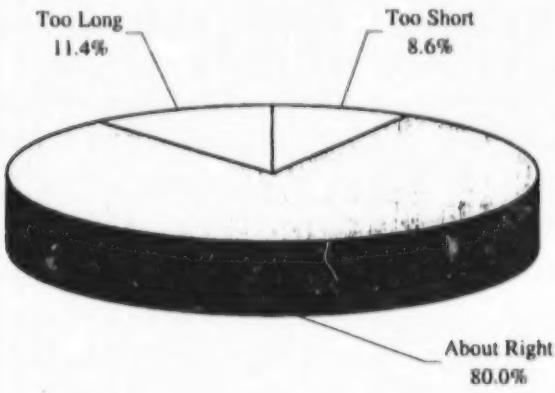
Question 8: The length of time needed to complete the tutorial.



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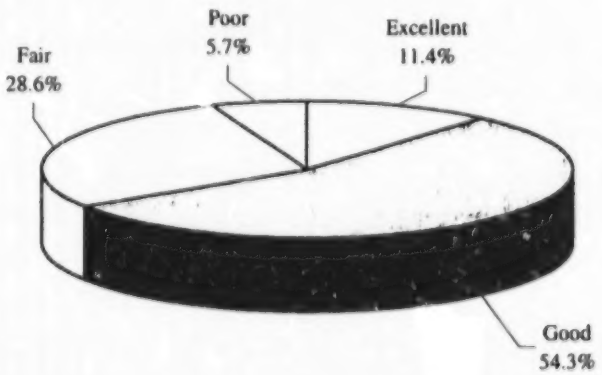
Question 9: Rating of the overall quality of this tutorial.



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Open-Ended Question: "How would you improve the quality of this tutorial?"

Reponses•

- The situations given were too easy. Any person with common sense would know what to do and not to do.
- Make sure the spelling and grammar is correct. Also some of the questions are simply ridiculous- I am sure more intelligent questions could be posed that really challenge our awareness of the rules and regulations.
- Question 9 was ambiguous. It reads: Q.9 When Amy gets sick for two weeks during her first quarter, she borrows Emily's notes so that she doesn't fall behind. With Emily's permission, she copies them word for word. Is this cheating?
- I would suggest possible finding clearer ways to state the questions...also most of the questions are common since, why would anyone really need to go over this?
- Some of the answers are too obvious.
- Some questions had poor grammar.
- Diversify the theme. I am aware that cheating a big deal on campus, but there are also other things such as, studying habits. Like sharing readings with other people, Making sure you stay on task with the syllabus, etc.
- The thing I would add would be information about "turn it in dot com." What if someone honestly writes their own paper, but it comes up as being plagiarized because there are only so many ways to say something.
- The answers were pretty obvious. It was close to common sense.
- Most everything covered in the tutorial was common sense. As a returning student, a lot has changed with regards to plagiarism such as the use of TurnItIn.com. The are of plagiarism which is the most vague is the copying of another person's ideas.
- By just using logic I was able to read the questions and answer all but two correctly without having to read the information provided above. I found the more complex questions were the ones that made me review the provided information.
- I would suggest that the tutorial should address a wider variety of situations and topics. I felt like after reading the first couple of topics, I didn't read the rest of the informational paragraphs because the answers to the questions were predictable.

- There were some grammatical errors
- I think it serves its purpose well in outlining for students what they can and cannot do.
- There was a typo in one of the questions. It said "refect" instead of "reflect." I think that some of the scenarios were too obvious and I felt like an elementary school kid while taking it. Some of the intros seemed repetitious.
- There is a repeated answer choice on question 3 I believe.
- Many of these concepts are inherent in the students straight out of high school. I could answer many of these questions (and did) without reading the concepts at all. The test is too long, and the rewards are vague.
- Grammar and big gaps should be edited

**A few of the suggestions listed above are incomplete because the field in the tutorial where students responded was limited, capturing only 254 characters.*

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